

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 24034 210913Z POSS DUPE
ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 STR-07 PA-01 ICA-11 IO-13
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R 210847Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9738
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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E.O.11652:N/A

TAGS: ETRD, PORG, TH, SF

SUBJ: RTG "BAN" ON TRADE WITH SOUTH AFRICA

1. DURING THE AUGUST 5-6 WEEKEND ARTICLES APPEARED IN LOCAL PRESS ANNOUNCING THAILAND WAS BREAKING TRADING RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA. SUBSEQUENT STORIES STATED THAT THE RTG HAS BANNED FURTHER TRADE WITH SOUTH AFRICA. A CHECK INTO THE STORIES SHOWED THAT WHILE THE RTG IS VERY MUCH INTENT ON MAINTAINING ITS GROUP 77 CREDENTIALS, THE RTG CANNOT LEGALLY BAN TRADE WITH SOUTH AFRICA.

2. THE RTG ANNOUNCEMENT BANNING TRADE WITH SOUTH AFRICA CAME ABOUT AS A RESULT OF A COMPLAINT LODGED WITH RTG'S GENEVA DELEGATION THAT A THAI FIRM HAD PURCHASED SOME NICKEL FROM RHODESIA. IN RESPONDING TO THE COMPLAINT THE RTG BUREAUCRACY HAS APPARENTLY LUMPED SOUTH AFRICA IN WITH RHODESIA UNDER AN OPERABLE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION (#253) CALLING FOR A BAN ON TRADE WITH RHODESIA.

3. KNOWLEDGEABLE OFFICIALS IN MFA CONFIDE THERE IS NO EXISTING PROVISION IN THAI LAW ENABLING RTG TO ENFORCE
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A BAN ON TRADE WITH SOUTH AFRICA. THE RTG THEREFORE IS TRYING TO DISCOURAGE TRADE HOPING THAT THERE WILL BE NO PUBLIC TEST ON THE ISSUE. THE RTG HAS HOWEVER INSTRUCTED IMPORTERS AND EXPORTERS THAT THEY WILL BEGIN TO REGISTER TRADE WITH SOUTH AFRICA.

4. MFA OFFICIAL WHILE ADMITTING THAT A "BAN" WAS NOT AN

ACCURATE WORD IN DESCRIBING THE RTG'S ACTION ON THIS
QUESTION SAID NEVERTHELESS THAT IT REFLECTS A LONG
STANDING GENERAL THAI POLICY OF NOT GIVING OFFICIAL
SANCTION AND SUPPORT TO THE EXISTING RATHER MODEST COM-
MERCIAL TRADE RELATIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, THEY HAVE REFUSED TO
DISCUSS LANDING RIGHTS FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN AIRLINES.
MORE RECENTLY THE RTG HAS TURNED DOWN A REQUEST FROM
THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPRESENTATIVE IN HONG KONG TO ESTABLISH
A TRADING RELATIONSHIP. ABRAMOWITZ

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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